

the States and to the people. We did not come to destroy. We came to renew, to renew the American dream for future generations of Americans, to renew the freedom that made this Nation great and kept it strong.

The President's budget does none of this. It increases spending. It increases taxes. It increases the power of the Federal Government.

This body must be about the work of the future, not the past. It is immoral for us to mortgage our children's and grandchildren's future. The truth is the future begins now. It is in our hands. It is time for us to lead. We must balance the budget with a real balanced budget.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senator from Vermont and I were going to speak. I know he has a time limitation, so I yield to him.

NGAWANG CHOEPHEL

Mr. JEFFORDS. I thank my colleague. I will be very brief. I understand Senate Resolution 19, concerning the imprisonment of Tibetan ethnomusicologist Ngawang Choephel may be coming to the floor later in the day, and I want to speak in favor of it. It will be most useful if we pass this legislation, and I will be most pleased to vote for the passage of this legislation.

This case has a special resonance in Vermont because Mr. Choephel was a Fulbright scholar at Middlebury College from 1993 to 1995, and has hundreds of friends throughout the State. He is well known as a talented and compassionate individual, who cares deeply about the culture of the Tibetan people.

Indeed, it was while he was researching and recording traditional folk song and dance in Tibet in the fall of 1995 that he was arrested by the Chinese authorities and held incommunicado. It was over a year before the Chinese Government acknowledged in letters to me and other Members of Congress that he was in custody.

The charges filed against him by the Chinese Government—that he was in Tibet to spy for the Dalai Lama, shocked and outraged those of us who know Ngawang well. His subsequent conviction at a secret trial and an incredible 18-year sentence are an injustice and have been widely and justifiably condemned by society in general.

I hope this resolution will help to convince Beijing to reconsider its actions in this case, and to release Ngawang immediately and unconditionally. The Chinese Government needs to understand that its handling of this and other human rights cases, and its continued repression of the minority rights in Tibet, are serious setbacks to the Chinese-American relationship and make it difficult to pursue cooperation in other areas.

I yield to my good colleague and friend from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague from Vermont. I thank him for his strong support on the issue of Ngawang Choephel. He and I have heard from so many Vermonters who met Ngawang Choephel at his time in Middlebury and feel as we do.

I also thank Senator MOYNIHAN for his support of this former Middlebury College student and this Fulbright scholar, and also for his support of other prisoners of conscience in Tibet. Senator MOYNIHAN has been a stalwart supporter of Tibet and its people for as long as I can remember. The fact he has sponsored this resolution gives added weight to it.

Like so many in Vermont, I was outraged when I heard of Mr. Choephel's 18-year prison sentence in December. This followed a secret trial and followed a year of incommunicado detention. The Chinese Government has not released a shred of evidence that Mr. Choephel committed any crime. In fact, I understand the entire 16 hours of videotape that he sent out of Tibet prior to his arrest contained only footage of traditional Tibetan music and dance. That is what he studied at Middlebury College and that is the reason he returned to Tibet.

The frustrating aspect of this is that China has done so much to destroy a lot of the tradition of Tibet, the history, the writings, the music, the dance. Mr. Choephel was simply preserving for future generations what is so important in this ancient, ancient culture. When the Chinese authorities finally acknowledged that Mr. Choephel had been arrested, and they did not do that until a year after he disappeared despite numerous inquiries on his behalf, the State Department called for his immediate release. Even after he was convicted, the Chinese Government refused to release any information to support the charge against him.

Many of us suspect that his arrest and sentence were intended to intimidate the Dalai Lama's supporters in the United States. The Dalai Lama's supporters have voiced their support for Mr. Choephel, but I am not aware of any relationship between Mr. Choephel and the Dalai Lama. If the Chinese authorities' purpose was to scare off these supporters, they are going to be disappointed. It is only going to embolden those like myself who support Tibet and its people.

I have written several letters to Chinese and United States officials, as has Senator JEFFORDS and Representative SANDERS and others. I was in Beijing in November, and I asked President Jiang Zemin personally about the case of Ngawang Choephel, and I raised the case of Ngawang Choephel with the other Chinese authorities with whom I met. Just last week I sent letters to President Jiang Zemin and Vice President GORE. The Vice President is due to travel to China in the near future.

Those letters were signed by the Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE, and by Senators FEINSTEIN, GLENN, KEMPTHORNE, and DORGAN, all of whom were on the November delegation to China.

Of course there have been all kinds of articles and editorials on Mr. Choephel's behalf in this country.

I said to the Chinese that here, at a time when we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Fulbright Scholarship Program, a Fulbright scholar from Vermont is arrested unjustly. It shows a lack of any sense of history on the part of the Chinese in this because, of course, the first Fulbright scholarships 50 years ago were used in China. Now, on the 50th anniversary of the Fulbright scholarship, the Chinese arrest a person who was simply recording an ancient culture.

So, our resolution calls for the release of Ngawang Choephel. It urges United States officials to raise his case in their meetings with China's officials, to support a resolution on human rights in Tibet and China at the U. N. Commission on Human Rights, to urge the Chinese Government to allow international human rights groups to monitor human rights in Tibet, and to support an exchange program for Tibetan students. It says, instead of bringing the curtain down on Tibet, open the doors to Tibet, open them to this wonderful, wonderful culture.

The resolution makes clear to the Chinese Government that the United States Senate considers improvements and respect for human rights in China and Tibet a priority. There would be no better way for the Chinese Government to demonstrate sincerity on human rights than to release Mr. Choephel.

This resolution and the support for Mr. Choephel that we all share are not intended to embarrass or unfairly single out China. We want relations between our two great countries to improve. But our purpose is to call attention to a terrible mistake that has been made in the hope that China's Government will review the case and set Mr. Choephel free. I intend to keep writing and speaking about Ngawang Choephel until that day comes. So I thank Senator MOYNIHAN for his leadership as well as the other dozens of Members of Congress, the hundreds of Vermonters, and Americans around the country who have signed letters in support of Ngawang Choephel.

The Chinese should look at the names on these resolutions. This is not a Democrat or Republican issue, not conservative or liberal issue. It goes across the political spectrum in this body. What it says is that we are as interested in human rights as anybody else. It also says, when you have an ancient culture like the Tibetans', an ancient religion, ancient music, ancient writings and speakings, they cannot be stamped out by anybody and they should not be stamped out by anybody. The Chinese should respect the culture of the Tibetans.

The Tibetans pose no threat to the People's Republic of China. But actions in trying to suppress, to eliminate, to destroy their religion, their culture, their music and their writings, that poses a threat to all, including those of us in the United States, the greatest democracy on Earth.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent a letter about Mr. Choephel to Vice President GORE signed by all Members of the Daschle delegation to China be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, February 11, 1997.

Hon. ALBERT GORE,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. VICE PRESIDENT: We learned recently that you plan to visit China this spring. We were in Beijing in November, where we met with President Jiang Zemin. Among the issues Senator Leahy raised with the President was the case of a Tibetan named Ngawang Choephel, a former Fulbright scholar at Middlebury College in Vermont where he studied and taught ethnomusicology. When he returned to Tibet in 1995 to make a video about transitional music and dance, he was detained on charges of spying and held incommunicado for 15 months. Last month, after a secret trial, he was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Mr. Choephel sent many hours of video footage to India before he was detained, which we understand deals only with traditional music and dance. Other than referring to an alleged "confession," the Chinese have never produced any evidence to support the charge that Mr. Choephel engaged in espionage on behalf of the United States or anyone else. The State Department has urged the Chinese to release him.

We believe the Chinese government has made a tragic mistake. Over forty Members of Congress have signed letters to President Jiang and the Chinese Ambassador calling for Mr. Choephel's release. We urge you to stress the administration's view that Mr. Choephel should be released, and to ask President Jiang to personally look into this case.

Sincerely yours,

PATRICK LEAHY,
THOMAS A. DASCHLE,
DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
JOHN GLENN,
BYRON L. DORGAN,
DIRK KEMPTHORNE.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I urge all Senators to support this resolution.

I do not see others on the floor seeking recognition. Could I ask the Chair what the parliamentary situation is?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business with a limitation on speaking for 5 minutes except by unanimous consent. That time will expire at 3 p.m.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I see other Senators have come to the floor so I will yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. How many minutes do I have, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Five minutes.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. BAUCUS pertaining to the introduction of S. 415 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

VETERANS SAY "RATIFY THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION"

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words today about the Chemical Weapons Convention [CWC], which has been submitted to the Senate for advice and consent.

Various aspects of this historic treaty are now being debated. However, I would maintain that one of the most important considerations for the Senate is how the CWC will affect our military forces in the field. Will it or will it not help reduce the threat of a poison gas attack against U.S. troops? As the Persian Gulf war demonstrated, this threat is real and must be addressed.

After reviewing the accord, I have concluded that the CWC will indeed help to protect U.S. fighting forces from chemical attack. But don't just take my word for it, consider the opinion of several respected veterans groups and military associations who have come out in favor of the CWC, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the American Ex-Prisoners of War, AMVETS, the American G.I. Forum, the Korean War Veterans Association, the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., and the National Association of Black Veterans.

VFW Commander in Chief James E. Nier, in calling for Senate ratification of the CWC, said: "This treaty will reduce world stockpiles of [chemical] weapons and will hopefully prevent our troops from being exposed to poison gases as we believe happened in the Gulf War."

The Vietnam Veterans of America lists ratification of the CWC among its top legislative priorities, noting that the treaty would be "a substantive step toward preventing chemical weapons exposure problems for veterans in the future similar to those experienced by Persian Gulf War veterans and the veterans of prior wars."

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I can vouch for the fact that these groups are among the most unflinching supporters of American national security interests and would not support the CWC if they believed that it put America's fighting forces at greater risk.

Several of our Nation's best-known and most decorated veterans have spoken out in their own right in support of the CWC, including Gen. Colin Powell,

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, and Adm. Elmo Zumwalt.

In a hearing before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in January, General Schwarzkopf made no bones about his views on the matter. "We don't need chemical weapons to fight our future warfares," he told the committee, adding "By not ratifying the [CWC] we align ourselves with nations like Iran, Libya, and North Korea, and I'd just as soon not be associated with those thugs in this particular matter."

Admiral Zumwalt, in an editorial in the Washington Post, stated that those who oppose the CWC "do a grave disservice to America's men and women in uniform." "Militarily," he wrote, "this treaty will make us stronger."

Those who now lead our troops have also registered their unequivocal support for the treaty. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Shalikashvili testified last year that the CWC is "clearly in our national interest" and "would reduce the probability that U.S. forces would encounter poison gas in future conflicts." The influential Reserve Officers Association of the United States, representing over 100,000 active-duty, Reserve, and retired military officers, declared in a February 19 resolution that "ratification of the CWC will enable [the U.S.] to play a major role in the development and implementation of CWC policy, as well as providing strong moral leverage to help convince Russia of the desirability of ratifying the convention."

Mr. President, even the treaty's supporters admit that the CWC is an imperfect treaty. However, all international agreements, by their very nature, involve some compromises. This particular treaty has been signed by 161 countries and involves the most comprehensive verification regime of any international arms control accord to date. Moreover, 68 countries have already ratified the CWC, which means that the treaty will come into effect on April 29 whether or not the United States ratifies it. In view of this, the only issue at hand is whether the United States is better off within the treaty regime, working with others to reduce the threat, or on the outside, with a handful of rogue states like Libya and North Korea.

Almost 6 years ago, then-President Bush foreswore the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances and began efforts, supported by Congress, to destroy our existing stockpiles of chemical arms. That remains U.S. policy. Doesn't it make sense, as long as we're destroying our own chemical weapons, to do everything we can to make sure that others follow suit? The CWC is our most effective tool for accomplishing this task.

Those who oppose the treaty have come up with no better alternative than to have us sit on our hands. Negotiating another treaty is out of the question—there is no international interest in a new treaty and, even if there were, such a treaty would take